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# KNIGHTMARE MASTER

Director Joel Schumacher  
sculpts the adventure of "Batman Forever."

By MARC SHAPIRO

**W**hen director Joel Schumacher accepted the assignment to helm *Batman Forever*, he thought "it was going to be great fun." But approximately two months before the Bat-cast and crew set up the movie's first shot on Wall Street in New York City, Schumacher came down with a bad case of the doubts.

"I thought to myself, 'What have I done?' " recalls the director who made *The Lost Boys* and *Flatliners* (which he discussed in STARLOG #158). "I had never directed anything of this size or this complexity before. It dawned on me that this was not going to be fun and that this would be the most arduous thing I had ever done in my life."

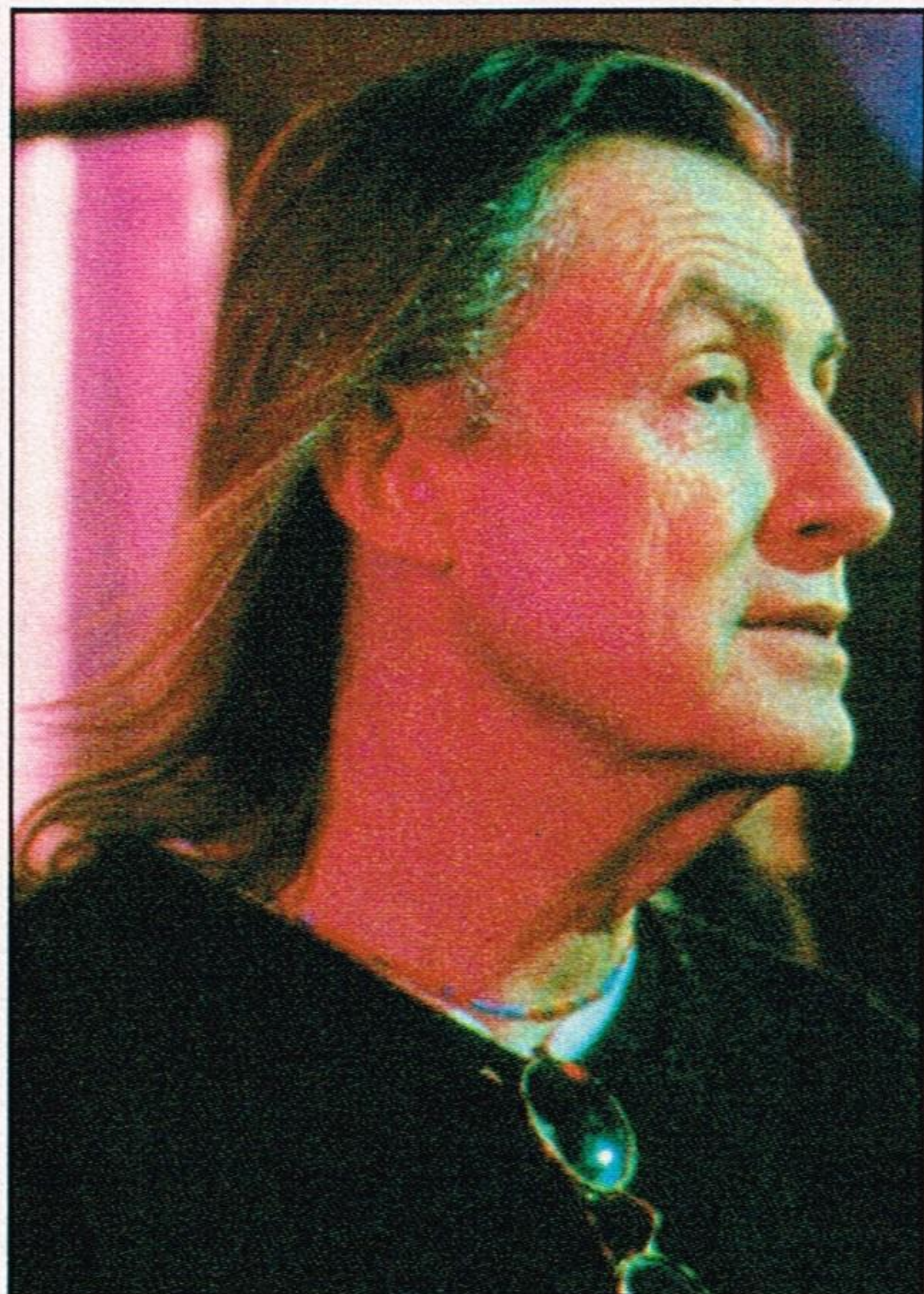
Schumacher is expressing nagging doubts on the last day on the set of *Batman Forever*. Comfortable in his director's chair, alternating sips of coffee with farewells to crew members, the director is alternately sad and happy at the prospect of completing the film. He's also quite pleased that his initial fears about helping the further adventures of the Dark Knight didn't hamper his efforts.

"My feeling going into this was that it was going to be a very arduous task—like climbing Mt. Everest," he recalls. "I thought, 'What have I gotten myself into. Why am I doing this? I must be crazy.'"

"But the minute we started shooting, those fears went away. That doesn't necessarily mean that the movie's any good. It just means that I had a great time."

"This is the last day of filming. We're coming down towards the end. We've got some stuff in the Batcave and some stuff with the Batboat and that's it. I'm actually very sad, and I didn't expect that. I'm still kind of shocked by it all."

The self-described "aging hippie" is currently having a great time dealing with the rumors that he's already signed to do a fourth *Batman* movie. "When I was driving over to have lunch with Tim Burton to do *Batman Forever*, I was wondering, 'Is any-



"I was wondering, 'Is anybody even interested in a new *Batman* movie?' " asks Joel Schumacher. Guess so, otherwise he wouldn't be helping *Batman Forever*.



"I found that everyone in the Batman Universe has a dual identity," Schumacher says, and judging by the Riddler (Jim Carrey) and Two-Face (Tommy Lee Jones), he's right.



body even *interested* in a new *Batman* movie?' And now here I am on the last day of shooting and there's already this rumor that I'll be doing the fourth one. I guess that means there is still interest."



"You have Dick Grayson [Chris O'Donnell], whose parents' death fuels his desire to be a vigilante," explains Schumacher.

Schumacher was all set to begin shooting *The Client* in Tennessee when he got a call from the top brass at Warner Bros. requesting his presence in Los Angeles the next day for breakfast.

"They didn't offer me *Batman* or any other movie,"

"Two-Face seemed like the perfect villain," the director states.

"Nobody is more ying-yang than he is."

relates Schumacher. "What they did say was that they would like to offer me the corporation's largest asset. I had heard the rumors that they were going to offer me *Batman*, but it took me a few minutes to figure out that's what they were actually talking about."

The director said he would only accept the offer to do *Batman Forever* if Tim Burton, the visionary behind the recent films, "wanted me to do it." So, with all those

MARC SHAPIRO, *STARLOG's* West Coast correspondent, profiled Scott Bakula in issue #212.

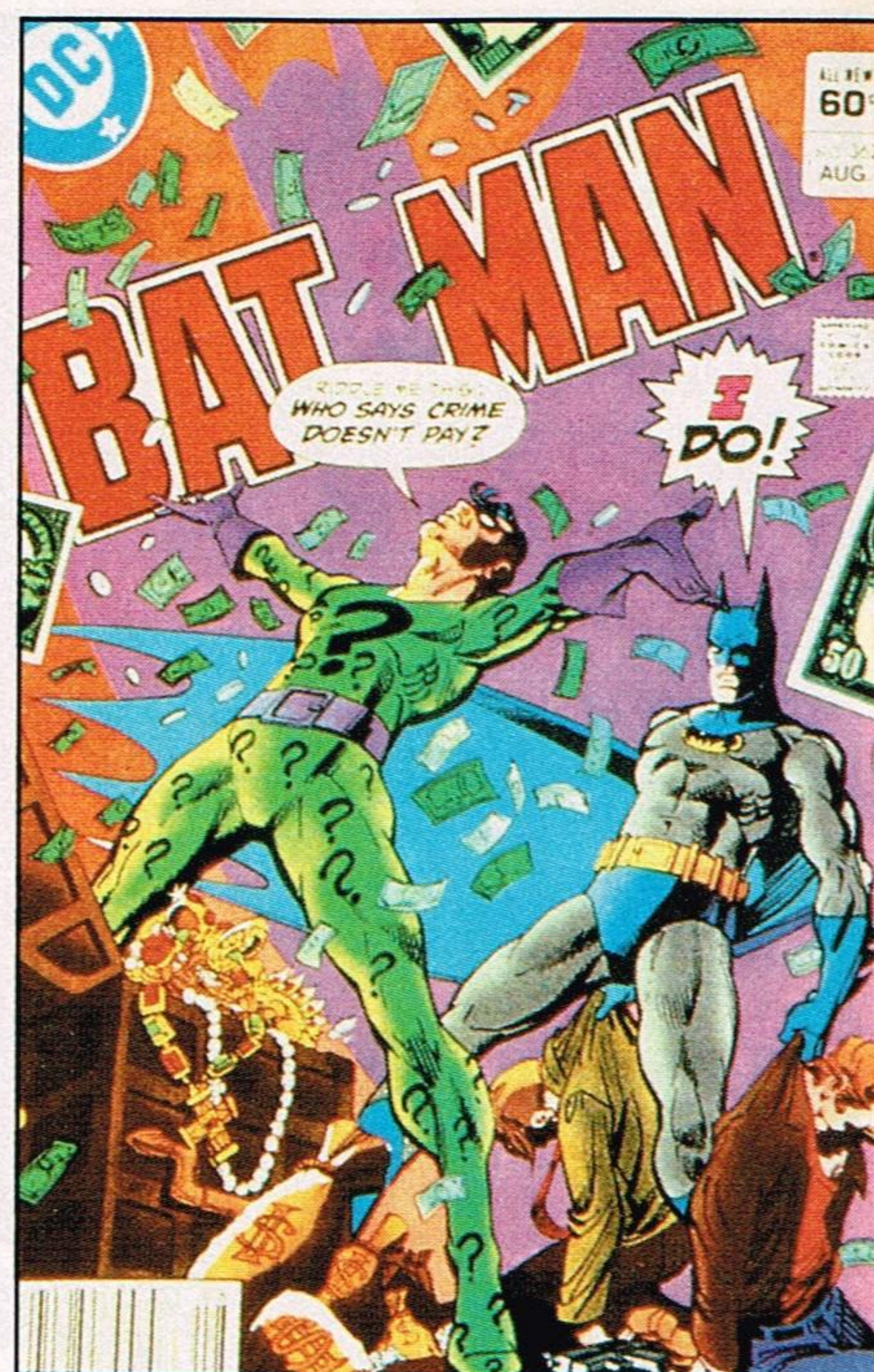


"What we set out to do with *Batman Forever* was to make a living comic book," says Schumacher. "I went back to the roots of Batman and read as many of the comic books as I could get my hands on."

rumors already ringing in his ears, Schumacher left the breakfast meeting and headed for lunch with Burton.

"Tim definitely wanted me to do it. He didn't give me any direction. He just said he was glad I was doing it and if I needed any help, I should call him."

Schumacher immediately plunged into research that would ultimately culminate in a skeleton of an idea and a character list that he would hand over to the film's initial writing team, Lee and Janet Scott Batchler. "I had seen the two previous *Batman* movies, but I thought it was important not to study them. Instead, I went back to the roots of Batman and read as many of the comics as I could get my hands on. I had a comic book in my hand everywhere I went. I just immersed myself in them."



He discovered that at the core of Batman was the theme of duality. "I found that *every-one* in the Batman Universe has a dual identity. All the villains either have another identity or have been another person. So, it seemed to me that duality would be a perfect storyline for *Batman Forever*."

"I wanted to do a story where Bruce Wayne is struggling with the Batman side of himself. He wakes up one day and wonders why he became Batman. That would allow us to go back and take a mythic look at his roots. Given that set-up, Two-Face seemed the perfect villain, because nobody is more ying-yang than he is. Who better to have around to question Batman and his identity than the Riddler, the ultimate mind game player? In comes Dr. Chase Meridian, a criminal psychologist who happens to look like Nicole Kidman. Hey, it's *my* comic book. That's how my criminal psychologists look. Anyway, she falls for Batman and Bruce is in love with her. Finally you have Dick Grayson, whose parents' death fuels his desire to be a vigilante. It's a total mirror of Bruce Wayne's life and it gives Bruce something to deal with. I ended up with many characters that all feed into one idea."

## Bad Blood

The director relates that his choice of villains was largely a matter of personal taste. "I wanted to do the Riddler because I had always loved the character in the comic books and the TV series and I felt he was the next logical villain. I knew Two-Face was very popular in the comics, but I took a shine to the character when I saw my godson playing with the Two-Face action figure. I felt the two villains would match up well."

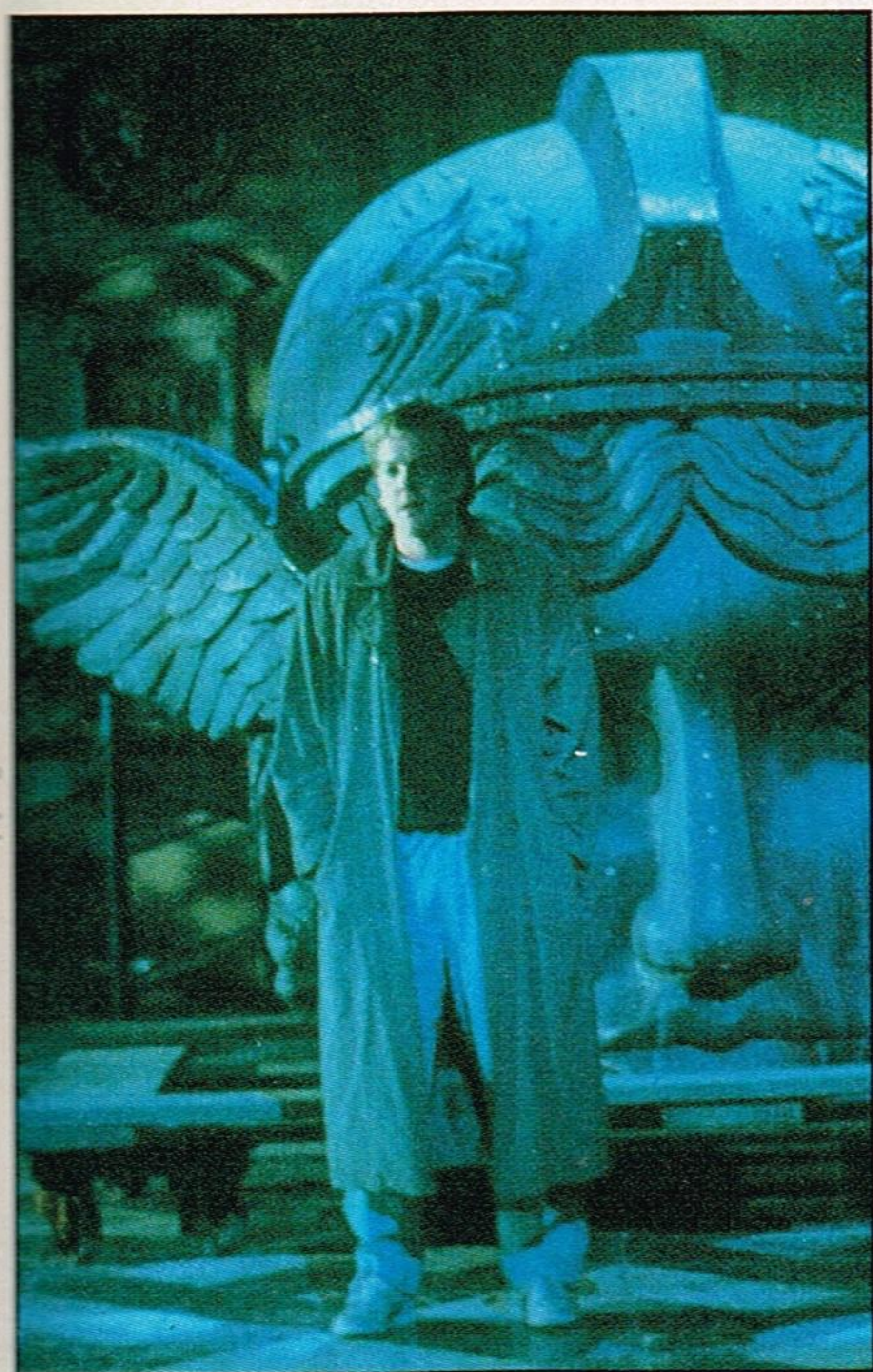
*Batman Forever*, directed by Schumacher from a script by the Batchlers and Akiva

"I chose Val Kilmer because I thought he would be the perfect Bruce Wayne/Batman," Schumacher reveals. Maybe because he has a chin.

All Batman Art: Courtesy Warner Bros.







Schumacher is no stranger to the sci-fi/fantasy genre, as he directed both *Lost Boys* and the afterlife thriller, *Flatliners*.

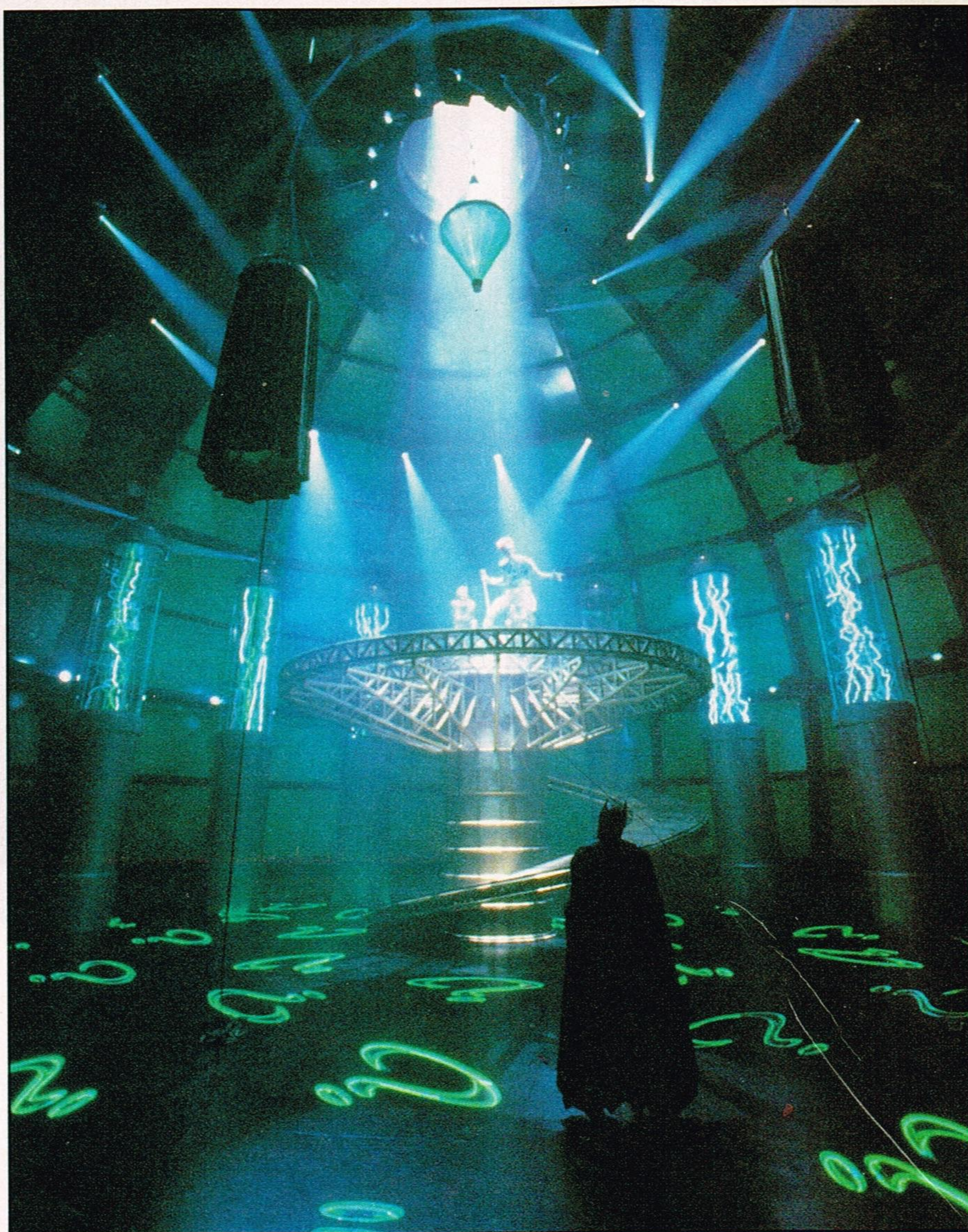
Goldsman (who discussed the film in CS #51), opens with the dreaded Two-Face (Tommy Lee Jones) escaping from Arkham Asylum bent on revenge against the man he holds responsible for his disfigurement—Batman (Val Kilmer).

Meanwhile, at the Wayne Institute, brilliant techno-nerd and all-around Bruce Wayne groupie Edward Nygma (Jim Carrey) is showing his boss his latest invention, a mind-altering device that Wayne, seeing its potential for evil, halts development of promptly. Nygma freaks out, adopts the villainous guise of the Riddler and teams with Two-Face to bring down both Batman and Bruce Wayne. In the process, they kill a circus trapeze family, the Flying Graysons. The lone survivor, young Dick Grayson (Chris O'Donnell), plots vengeance as he falls under the batwing of Bruce Wayne who sees in this future Robin his twin. Just when it seems things couldn't get more complex, enter Dr. Chase Meridian (Nicole Kidman), a criminal psychologist who falls for Batman while Bruce falls in love with her.

The only constants in all three Batman films, Michael Gough as Alfred and Pat Hingle as Commissioner Gordon (see page 46), reprise their roles. The cast also includes Drew Barrymore, Debi Mazar, Ed Begley Jr., Don "The Dragon" Wilson and Rene Auberjonois.

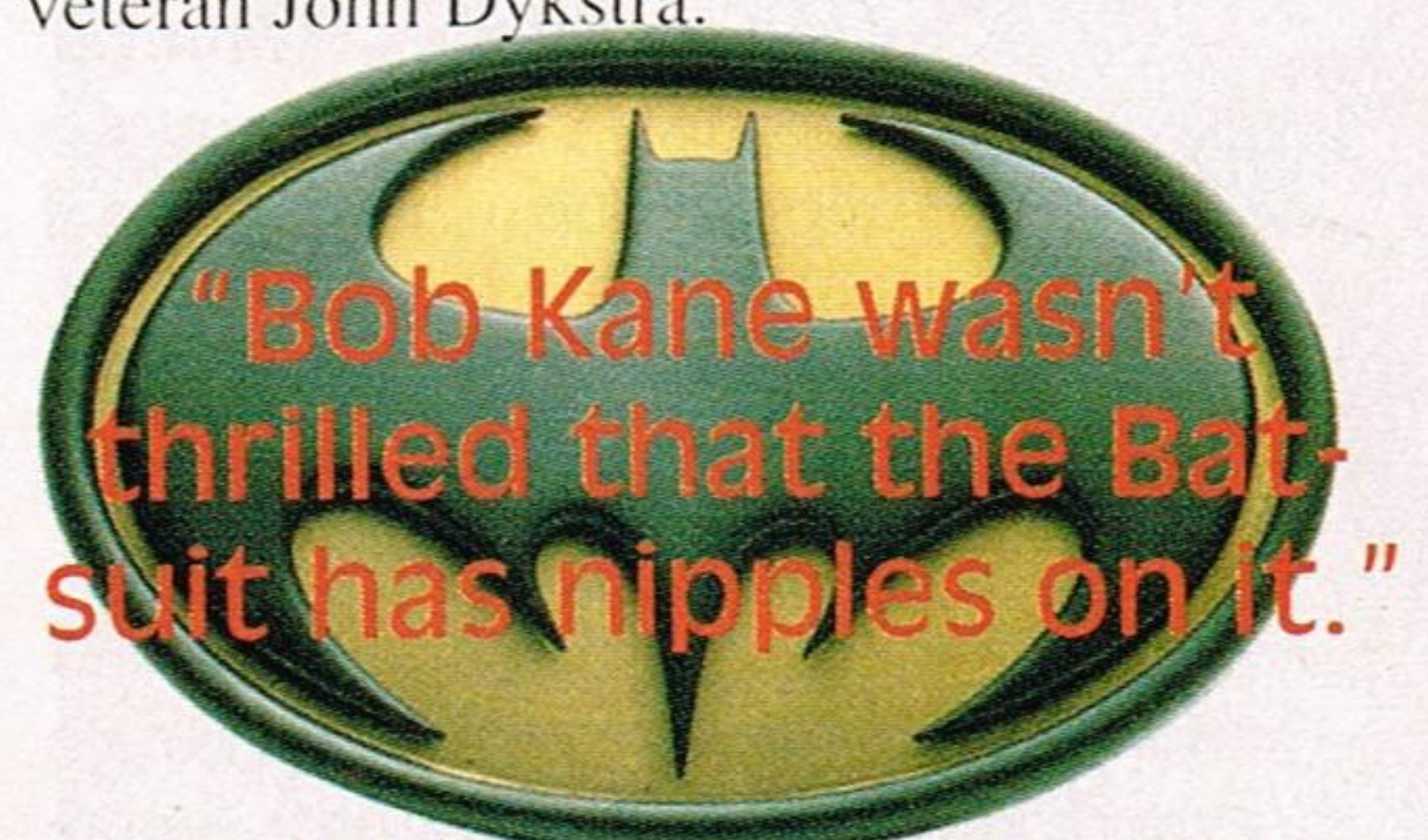
"Many of the movies I've made have been ensemble movies with many stories going on," Schumacher points out, noting that *Batman Forever* is no exception to a trend that includes *St. Elmo's Fire*, *Lost Boys* and *Flatliners*.

*Batman Forever*, filmed on location in Manhattan and on several soundstages in Los Angeles, is produced by Burton and Peter MacGregor-Scott and executive pro-



"There will always be a dark edge to Batman. I think that's part of what makes Batman great," Schumacher explains. "There will always be a haunted quality to him."

duced by Benjamin Melniker and Michael E. Uslan. Key creative personnel include art director Barbara Ling, cinematographer Stephen Goldblatt, costume designers Bob Ringwood and Ingrid Farren and special FX veteran John Dykstra.



The Batchlers were under contract to another studio when they were approached for *Batman Forever*, but Schumacher explains that "they played hooky and did a first draft for us. When they had to go back to the other studio, I brought in Akiva [who co-scripted *The Client*] and he did the subsequent drafts, but the storyline stayed the same all the way through."

Their final draft fell right in line with Schumacher's intended approach of making this tale of the Dark Knight a bit lighter.

"They're called comic books, not tragic books," quips the director, "and what we set out to do with *Batman Forever* was to make a living comic book. And it's very close to its roots. The Two-Face legend is very close to the comic book, as is Robin's origin. We went back to many of the original comic-book conventions.

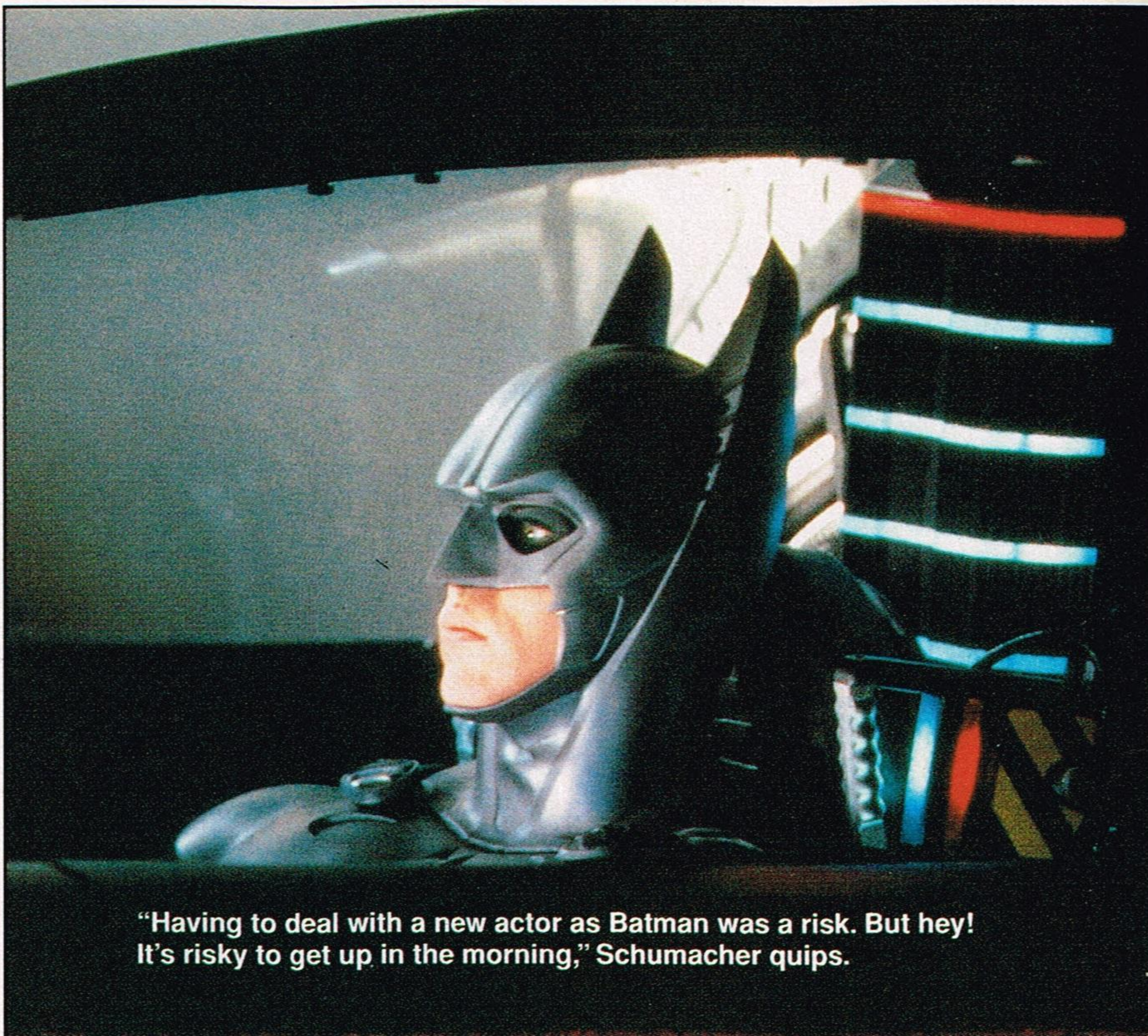
"I wanted this one to be much lighter and more fun than the previous *Batman* movies," he continues. "But there will always be a dark edge to Batman. I think that's part of what makes Batman great. There will always be a haunted quality to him, and we've tried to deal with that. But the basic challenge I saw in directing *Batman Forever* was to sort of have one toe as an homage to what has come before and the other nine toes trying to break some new ground. If you simply imitate something that someone has already done, then you insult them and the audience."

While there's action aplenty in this third Batman outing, the director felt, based on his initial story ideas and the finished script, that the relationships would hold equal weight. "In this movie, you're going to realize what





According to Schumacher, "We saw over 5,000 boys for the role of Dick Grayson, but I always felt that Chris was perfect."



"Having to deal with a new actor as Batman was a risk. But hey! It's risky to get up in the morning," Schumacher quips.



an intimate relationship Bruce Wayne and Alfred have. We see Alfred as the mother, father, confessor, confidant; he's a wonderful Dr. Watson to Bruce's Sherlock Holmes. The Bruce Wayne/Dick Grayson relationship is also quite strong and very confrontational. In the beginning, Dick is very angry, bent on revenge. A great deal of wrath is directed in Bruce's direction. And then you have Dr. Meridian, who's obsessed with one man and in love with another and basically can't figure out what she's doing.

"It all sounds pretty confusing," he laughs, "but I've actually been quite comfortable with all this. Maybe it's because I'm a bit of a schizophrenic myself, so none of this appears so strange."

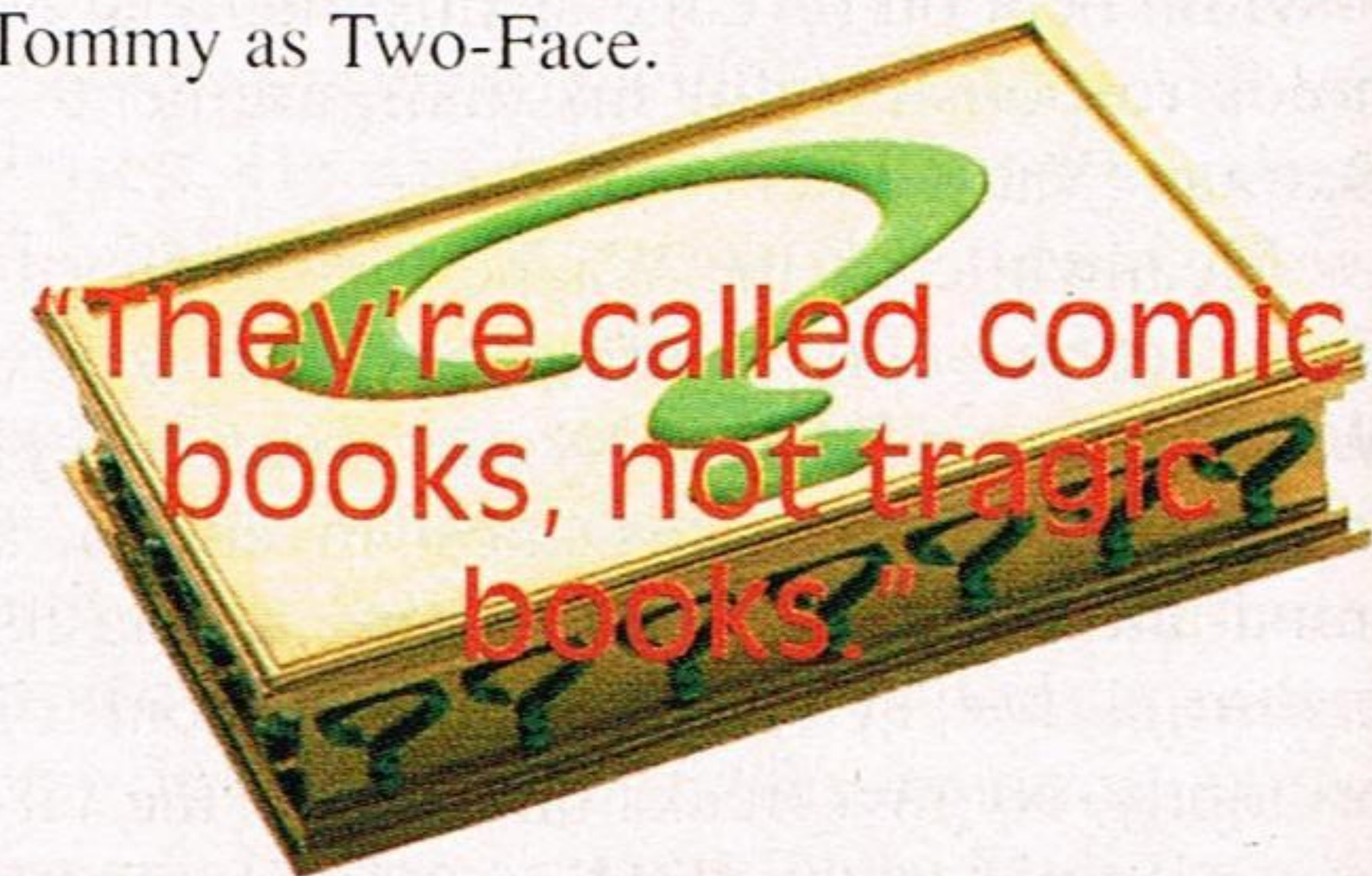
### Casting Coups

Casting *Batman Forever* began in 1993 and ran into a stumbling block when Michael Keaton dropped out of the lead. But Schumacher was quite happy with his replacement as well as the rest of the cast.

"I chose Val Kilmer because I thought he would be the perfect Bruce Wayne/Batman. Val playing Bruce Wayne changes things considerably. He's younger than Michael and so, even though he's still dark and brooding, he's an actor who's capable of playing things much lighter," the director explains. "We saw over 5,000 boys for the role of Dick Grayson, but I always felt that Chris was

**"I never saw these people as superstars. I hired them because of their talent and because I felt they were right for the roles," Schumacher says.**

perfect. I was in love with Nicole for a long time. Jim had just come out of *Ace Ventura* and seemed, both physically and character-wise, the perfect choice. The same went for Tommy as Two-Face.



"And, I never saw these people as superstars. I hired them because of their talent and because I felt they were right for the roles. I realize that there's a lot of attention being directed toward these people now and that, in certain circles, they *are* considered superstars. But that wasn't necessarily the case when they were first cast."

The first night of filming *Batman Forever* still holds one of the more pleasant memories for the director. "We closed down Wall Street for five blocks and after years of planning, we were all ready for the first shot. We were standing out in the middle of the street and suddenly, the Batmobile comes racing down the street at 100 miles an hour. It was like the beginning of a dream come true."

An additional element of dream fulfillment took place during a bank holdup sequence in which Batman confronts Two-Face. "We had decided early in pre-production that we wanted to create a new Batsuit that was more flexible and that would allow Val to move much more in the action sequences. And that bank sequence turned out amazing! Val had some martial arts training, so he was able to do most of his own stunts—which was pretty amazing in itself



"Jim had just come out of *Ace Ventura* and seemed, both physically and character-wise, the perfect choice [for the Riddler]," Schumacher states.



Design & Layout: Jim McLernon

because even though we redesigned the suit and it was closer to his own frame, it still weighed about 50 pounds and was very hot."

Another action-packed sequence that jumps to mind is one in which Batman, once again in the midst of battle, does a backflip out of a fountain. "Every time I turned around," Schumacher chuckles, "we were doing *some* big action thing. There was always somebody or something flying or some massive stunt."

One element of the *Batman Forever* production that worried Schumacher early on was how his actors would respond to each other. "You don't hire actors for their personalities, so I really didn't know what I was going to get. Happily, what I discovered was that, while they may be big stars, they're all very ambitious and they want to get things right. They came to the set every day with a great deal of inventive ideas and really worked hard."

## Eerie Effects

While Schumacher is no stranger to special FX, he does admit that the scale of *Batman Forever*'s computer and physical FX did give him pause. "*Lost Boys* and *Flatliners* both had special FX, but most of them were done in camera on very low budgets. Those movies looked good, but I think that had more to do with spit and polish than anything else. This was a whole different story. With this film, *everything* was storyboarded in advance. Then, I would meet with John Dykstra and Stephen Goldblatt before each scene that would require special FX. That way we would make sure that we got what we needed and the FX people got what they needed."

Schumacher chuckles as he relates how Batman creator Bob Kane was an occasional visitor to the set and how the director tried to explain some of the film's more '90s notions to the largely tradition-bound creator. "He



"In this movie, you're going to realize what an intimate relationship Bruce Wayne and Alfred [Michael Gough] have," explains Schumacher.

didn't like the idea of Dick Grayson wearing an earring. He didn't understand why it was necessary. He also wasn't thrilled with the fact that the new Batsuit has nipples on it. He would come up to me every once in a while and say, 'Joel, I just don't understand.'"

"I wouldn't have this job if Tim Burton

hadn't done such a brilliant job twice before me. But coming in on a third installment of anything can be tricky. If you're the new director, you have to start fresh. You can't try and figure out what the other director did wrong. You just have to follow your instincts; that's what you've been hired to do. You have to take on many risks when you're taking on something that's already known. If you're too timid, it can easily fail."

**"The Two-Face legend is very close to the comic book, as is Robin's."**

One thing that Schumacher didn't have to explain to Kane was the long-anticipated introduction of Robin. The director admits that inserting the Boy Wonder into *Batman Forever* was a risky creative decision. "I think it was in the beginning when the role hadn't been cast, but once we got Chris O'Donnell, it now seems like a brilliant move. But you know, everything is risky. Following in Tim's footsteps was a risk. Having to deal with a new actor as Batman was a risk. But hey! It's risky to get up in the morning."

For Joel Schumacher, taking on *Batman Forever* was a risk that seems to have been worth it. "I think I'm a totally different director than I was a year ago. I've done so many things on this film that I've never done before and I'm convinced that nothing about filmmaking will ever scare me again."



# GOTHAM'S FINEST

By TOM WEAVER

After 45 years, great American character actor Pat Hingle is still in service.

**P**at Hingle is proudly celebrating an anniversary—and *not* the sort of anniversary you would expect. “On March 1, it was 45 years since I got my first professional job,” says the North Carolina-based actor. “I got my first job in Rockville Centre, Long Island in 1950, at a little stock company, and that was where it all began. I was part of the Golden Days—what I think of as the Golden Days—of the New York Broadway theater, the ’50s, the ’60s and into the ’70s. I was also a part of the Golden Days of live television, which were very, very exciting. Having been part of all that is one of the things that I’m most pleased about in my career.”

Actually, Hingle has a great deal to be pleased about where his life and career are concerned, but he’s the sort of modest fellow who, when he tells stories, tends to leave out little “details” here and there. He names his Broadway plays without mentioning that he acted in four Pulitzer Prize winners. He talks about his stage role in *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* without bringing up the fact that he was nominated for a Tony. He recalls his six years in the Navy (during two wars) but neglects to add that he won seven battle stars.

TOM WEAVER, veteran STARLOG correspondent, is the author of *They Fought in the Creature Features* (McFarland, \$38.50). He profiled Irvin Yeaworth in issue #214.

And he talks about his children and his 11 grandchildren with more laughter and animation than he does his career. Now the thick-set, dimpled character star is a cast member in one of the most profitable film series of all time, playing Commissioner James Gordon in the *Batman* movies. “When I went to do this new one, *Batman Forever*, I said, ‘Listen, are you guys gonna hire Michael Gough, the British actor [STARLOG #215], to play Alfred again?’ And they told me, ‘Oh, yeah. You and Michael are the *bookends*—one on one end and one on the other, and we just put in other actors!’”

Hingle is relaxing in the kitchen of his oceanfront home, watching the waves come in off the Atlantic, as he reminisces about how he got his start in the *Batman* saga. “I was in Massachusetts, doing a mini-series called *The Kennedys of Massachusetts*, and I was playing J.P. Kennedy, the grandfather of the Kennedy group. That was when the script of *Batman* [1989] came to me. I had never watched *Batman*, the TV series, but Burgess Meredith, who used to live right down the road from me when I lived in Suffern, New York, was, of course, the Penguin on *Batman*. So, I was very much aware of what was going on, because Burgess and I were friends. When the opportunity to play Police Commissioner Gordon arose, I guess my main motivation for doing it, really, was the fact that it was going to be done in London, and

my wife had never been to London. I had worked there once before—we did the first TV version of *The Glass Menagerie* in London in 1966.

“So, London was the big thing. But also there existed at *that* time something in the story that fascinated me. Commissioner Gordon was the cop on the street who was the first one to respond to the scene of the murder of Bruce Wayne’s parents, and so he knew the Bruce Wayne story very early. Inside the movie, there was a picture in the paper of this little boy, about five, six years old, holding the leg of the police officer, and this police officer with his hand on the boy’s head. This was the beginning of the relationship between Gordon and Bruce Wayne. Now, of course, nobody (including Gordon) knew that Bruce Wayne was Batman; and Gordon, while he knew Bruce Wayne, had never gone to him and said, ‘Hey, listen, I was the cop that...’ And yet there was *always* this kind of a thing from Bruce Wayne, you know, ‘Why do I have a special feeling about this guy [Gordon]?’

“Well, this kind of *added* something to the story. Robin was in that first script, too, by the way. But then they got Jack Nicholson to play the Joker, and when they got Jack, the Joker got bigger and bigger and bigger, and everything *else* got weeded down. I had already made a commitment to the thing, and, hell, it paid bloody well, so I did it. Then when they did *Batman Returns*, Tim Burton sent me *that* script, and I got back to him and said, ‘Jesus, Tim, Police Commissioner Gordon’s not even *in* this!’ Tim said, ‘But he *is* gonna be in it, some way, somehow.’ And of course, Robin was in *that* script, too! Again, the part wasn’t much, but the *money* was,” he laughs.

As *Batman* was being shot at London’s Pinewood Studios, Hingle came to realize that the role of Batman (played by Michael Keaton) was more challenging than he first thought. “I began to suspect that as I watched the thing being done, and it was confirmed when I saw the film. The Batman role is more difficult—this *dual thing* of Batman and Bruce Wayne is more difficult to play than the Joker, the Penguin or any of the other roles. There is this duality there, and to play that kind of role must be very tricky.

“What I also remember about *Batman* is that the World Series was happening as we were filming it, and the London papers didn’t mention it at all. This is *The London Times* I’m talking about! It has stories on every snooker game that they play all over the United Kingdom, and nothing, I mean, not even the final scores, on the World Series! So, Jack Nicholson, who is a sports nut, too—



and wealthy!—had one of his people tape the games and fly them over, so we could see the games!”

“Bookends” Hingle and Gough flanked Keaton again in *Batman Returns*, the 1992 sequel which found the Dark Knight contending with *two* super-villains, Danny DeVito’s Penguin and Michelle Pfeiffer’s Catwoman. “I was always aware that in the first movie the Joker was a much bigger role than Batman was. And yet the movie was called *Batman*. And now here comes *Batman Returns* and here we’ve got the Catwoman and the Penguin, and I’m thinking to myself, ‘I guess they’re paying Michael a pretty penny,’ because he *had* to be saying to himself, ‘Hey, what’s the *name* of this movie?’

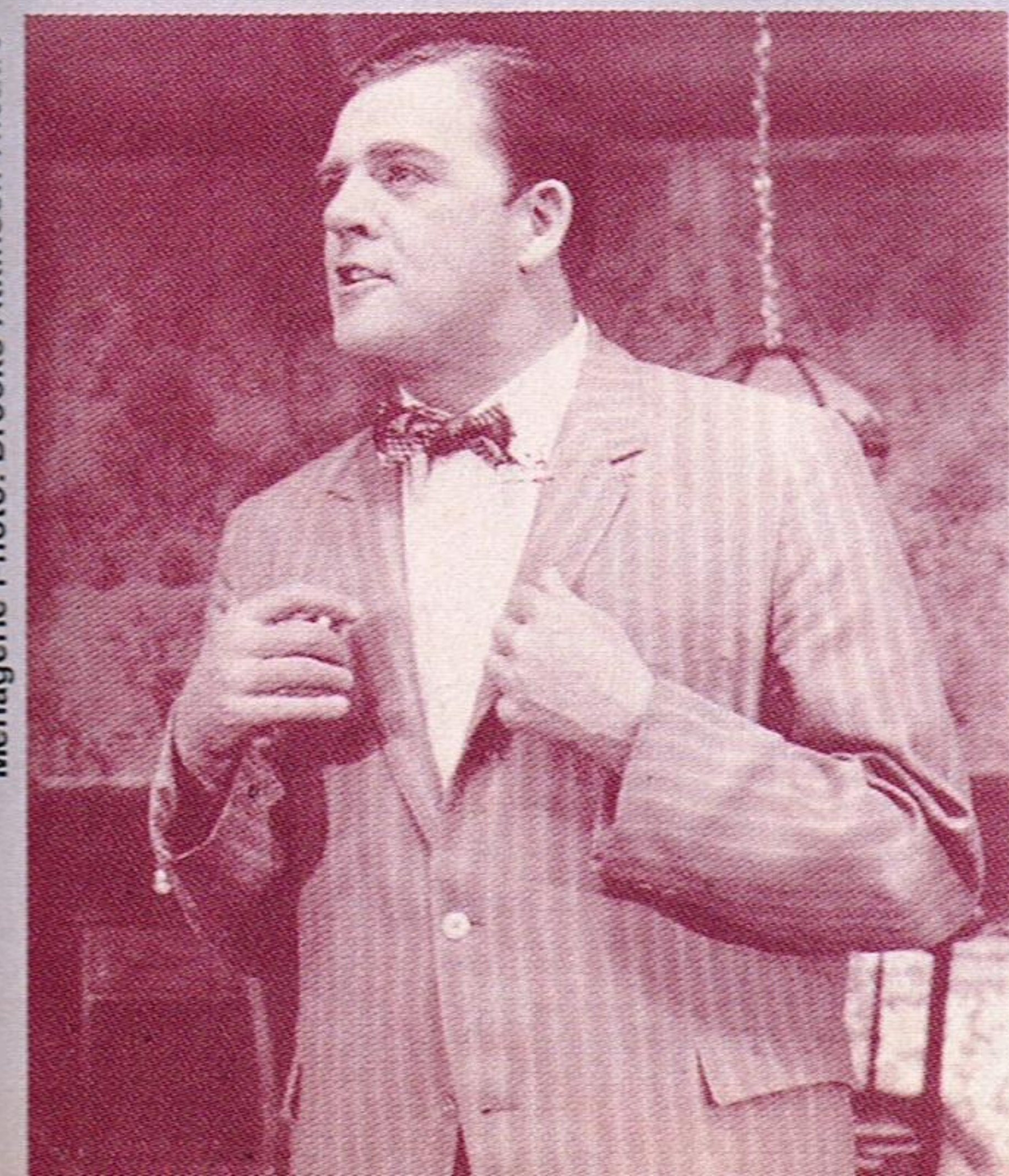
“Now they’re doing *Batman Forever* and I think Val Kilmer is going to be very, very good in the role—he’s a dandy actor too. You put either of them, Michael or Val, in the Bat-suit, and the main thing that you see about Batman is that he just happens to have this very full, sensual mouth. And Val Kilmer has a mouth just like Michael’s, very full and sensual, *not* a tight-lipped, Clint Eastwood kind of mouth. Hell, maybe that’s how Val got the role, I don’t know.”

## Heroic Commissioner

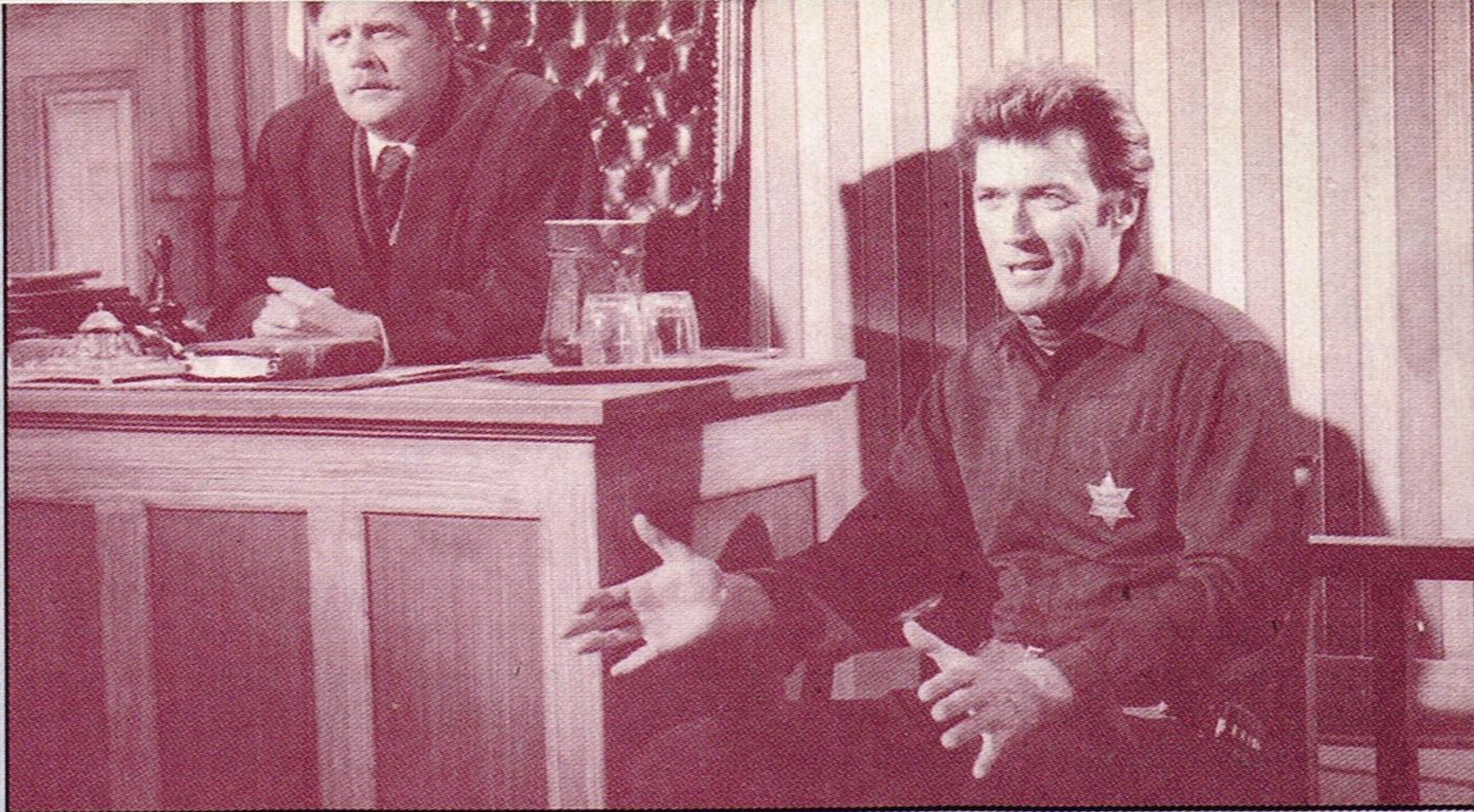
*Batman Forever* also marks the Bat-debut of a new director, Joel Schumacher, replacing Burton behind the megaphone. “I went to New York to see Joel—he and I didn’t know each other,” Hingle recalls of the initial meeting with his new director. “I flew up and back the same day—and I met with Joel at the Four Seasons in New York. Even at that time, they were having trouble making a secure deal with Michael Keaton. Nobody said anything about it, I just assumed that Michael would be doing Batman. I guess *he* assumed that, too, for a while! But it didn’t happen.”

There’s more of Commissioner Gordon in this second sequel, promises Hingle, who found working with Schumacher very different from contending with Burton. “What I have found is that Joel, when he talks to me about what he needs from me in a certain scene or something like that, is very understandable; I can grasp what he’s getting at

Seen here in *The Glass Menagerie*, Pat Hingle takes pride in having been part of Broadway’s “golden days.”



Menagerie Photo: Brooks Atkinson Theatre



High Photos: Copyright 1968 Warner Bros. Inc.



Playing Commissioner Gordon forever, Hingle is one of only two continuing “bookends” in the Bat-saga.

pretty clearly. He communicates well with actors. You can just see a movie like *The Client* and see what he did with that little boy, who was *not* a professional actor. Joel has the ability to communicate with an actor, which is *not* Tim Burton’s forté—at least not with *me*, because Tim sees in his [movies] things that I don’t see. Tim spends most of his life up on a cloud, or somewhere. Oh, he’s such a sweet man, but for me, working with Tim is almost like working with a child, because I have grandchildren and I don’t really see what *they’re* seeing, either! I felt more secure that I was giving Joel what he wanted and needed from me, and I was never certain what Tim felt that he needed.”

Younger moviegoers may know Hingle only from the *Batman* movies and his other more recent roles (like this year’s *The Quick and the Dead*), but theatergoers of the 1950s remember him as one of Broadway’s brightest talents, and baby boomers grew up with Hingle’s guest appearances on seemingly every TV series to hit the airwaves. Hingle (real name: Martin Patterson Hingle) was born in Denver, the son of a building contractor. His parents divorced when Hingle was still in his infancy (he never knew his father) and his mother supported the family by teaching school in Denver. She then began to travel (with her son in tow) in search of more

In addition to his TV shoot-em-ups, Hingle also tamed the West in features like *Hang ’em High* (with Clint Eastwood).

lucrative work; by age 13, Hingle had lived in a dozen cities. The future Tony Award nominee made his “acting debut” in the third grade. “There was this health play, and I played the carrot. I remember my whole part: I came on dressed like a carrot and I said, ‘And carrots for your eyes,’ and stepped back in line. I think that was my first acting chore, and at that time it didn’t seem like much of a way to make a living!”

Hingle attended high school in Texas and in 1941 entered the University of Texas, majoring in advertising. “Then, the War came along. I left the University, and went into the Navy. When I was released from active duty [January 1946], I went back to the University. But as I would walk around the campus, every time I would see a pretty girl I would say, ‘Gosh, I wonder who the heck *that* is,’ and I would be told, ‘Well, that’s so-and-so of the drama department.’ So, I got to thinking that all the pretty gals were over there! About this same time, I was seeing these signs around the campus, ‘Audition for the Curtain Club.’ You didn’t have to be a theater major, so I auditioned and I was accepted—but I really went over there to see the girls!

“They had just inaugurated a master’s degree and a doctorate in playwrighting, and a master’s degree in directing, in the drama department. And as a consequence, they were doing many, many plays. I generally played ‘character roles,’ older roles, because at 22, 23, I was closer to 65 than the 17- and 18-year-olds were,” he laughs. “I think I was cast just because of my age! But I found that I liked it and I felt very comfortable on stage, and so I shifted my major.”

Hingle also married his first stage manager, a fellow student. “Alyce [his wife of 32 years] and I came to New York from the University of Texas. I went to the American Theatre Wing, and there were some tough times—*nobody* was interested in me as an actor! I worked at night at Bloomingdale’s, sorting out charge slips, and then I had a job in the daytime as a waiter at the Town Hall Club. I came to New York in September ’49 and then in March ’50, I got the job at that stock company in Rockville Centre. Of course, that wasn’t much of a job, it was real minimum pay and I just barely made it. But I had started.”



He also began to work in TV, playing one of his earliest roles in an episode of the live CBS series *Suspense*. "It was 30 minutes long, and we did a version of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* with Basil Rathbone playing the two roles—in 30 minutes! You never saw Hyde, you just saw Jekyll, and then you would see people's reactions to Hyde. There's this street scene, here comes Hyde, seen from the back, and he bumps into this big, burly Cockney—me. I pull back on him and say, 'Watch where you're going!' And then I get a look at Rathbone's face and I start to cringe, 'Oh, sorry, guv'nor!' and I slink away."

As for working opposite Rathbone, Hingle admits, "I didn't get to speak with Rathbone then, but I did later. In 1952, when Adlai Stevenson was running against Dwight Eisenhower, I was a big Stevenson fan, and I worked for the Democrats in New York City. I was assigned to catch people at intermission outside theaters, to try to talk to them about Stevenson. I caught Rathbone one night and I introduced myself, 'We worked together just about a year ago,'—and he didn't remember from *nothin'*! Also, he was a staunch Eisenhower man, and he didn't want to have anything to do with me!"

More acting jobs were just beginning to come Hingle's way when the Korean War began and Hingle (who was in the inactive reserves) was recalled into the Navy for



Hingle idolized actor Walter Huston, was directed by his son John, and man-handled his granddaughter Anjelica in *The Grifters*.

with Ben Gazzara, Peter Mark Richman and other members of the stage cast. Other Broadway plays included *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs*, for which Hingle was Tony-nominated. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, as well as three other Broadway plays with Hingle in their casts (*J.B.*, *Strange Interlude* and *That Championship Season*), were Pulitzer Prize winners.

Hingle's film debut came in the 1954 classic *On the Waterfront*, directed by Elia Kazan. He worked with Kazan's protege, director Martin Ritt, three years later in Fox's *No Down Payment*. "Barbara Rush and I played man and wife. Joanne Woodward and Tony Randall were in it, and they were the only two that I knew from New York; I knew Joanne from Actors Studio. As we started our work day there at Fox, Joanne came to me and said, 'Listen, I think you're the type of person who says prayers, aren't you?' I said, 'Yes, I am, I say prayers in the morning and at night.' She said, 'Would you mention me in your prayers?'"

"I said, 'Just generally, Joanne, or specifically?' She said, 'Pray—ask God—to please delay [the release of] the first movie that I made out here. I was so bad, it's gonna be the end of things for me if it comes out first. Pray that *No Down Payment* comes out first, and then the other one.' I said, 'OK. Would you

tell me the name of the other movie?' She said, 'Yes, it's a thing called *The Three Faces of Eve*.' Well," he laughs, "God didn't listen to me. He brought *Three Faces of Eve* out, and of course she got an Oscar for that! That was my confirmation that actors don't always know when they've done a good job!"

## 20th Century Job

The apex of Hingle's stage career was *J.B.* (1958-9), a "modern morality play" by poet Archibald MacLeish, with Hingle in the title role as a 20th-century Job. ("Pat Hingle gives an almost unbearably moving performance," wrote critic Brooks Atkinson of *The New York Times*. "In every respect, *J.B.* is theatre on its highest level.") It was during the run of *J.B.* that Hingle took an accidental plunge down the elevator shaft of his New York apartment building, sustaining near-fatal injuries, laying near death for two weeks (and losing the little finger of his left hand); his recovery took more than a year. "I fell 54 feet—I shouldn't even be alive," the actor recalls. "But I survived that and started working again, either on crutches or canes. That horrible gait that I had in *Splendor in the Grass* [1961]—that was as good as I could walk! But Bill Inge just wrote in why my gait was like it was, and so I did the film."

In the 1960s, Hingle also did guest shots

Stephen King brought Emilio Estevez and Hingle to *Maximum Overdrive*, introducing the actor to North Carolina (where he now makes his home).



Most fans remember Hingle best from *Hang 'em High*, while his memories focus on his childhood hero, co-star Bob Steele.

another 22 months. "But then, when I came out of the Navy, things just began happening for me. I got into the Actors Studio in 1952 and that started things going." Hingle made his off-Broadway and Broadway debuts in *End as a Man*, and a few years later acted in the film version, *The Strange One* (1957),



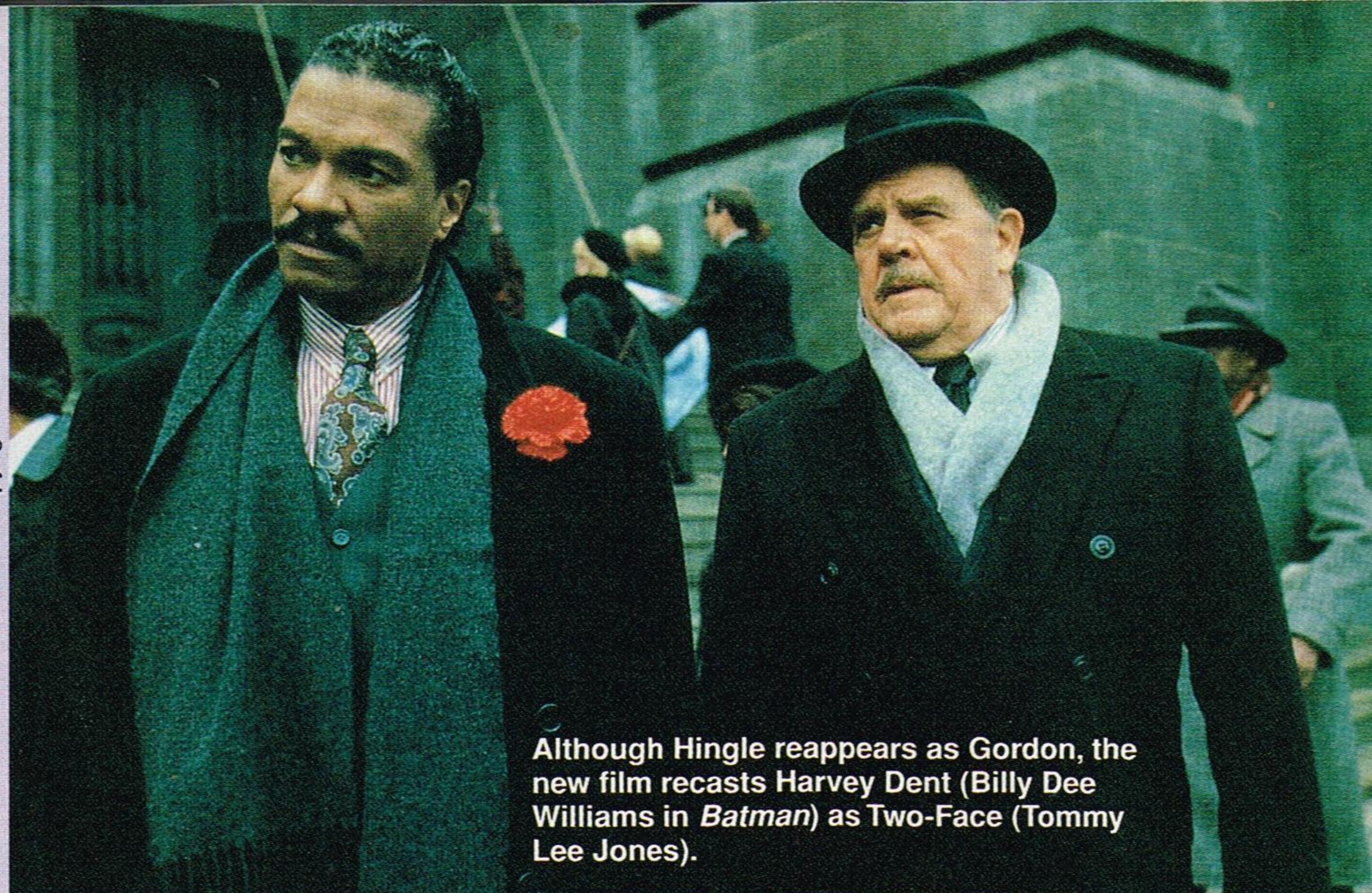
on some of the best and most popular TV series, including *Dr. Kildare*, *The Defenders*, *The Fugitive*, *Gunsmoke* and *The Twilight Zone*. "I was in one of the best *Twilight Zones* that they ever did. It was called 'The Incredible World of Horace Ford' and it was about this toy designer who goes back into his childhood, when he was a kid in Brooklyn. Every time they show the 'best' *Twilight Zones*, that one comes up again. It had been done live on *Studio One* [in 1955] with Art Carney playing this role, before we made it into a *Twilight Zone*. Nan Martin, who was in *J.B.* with me on Broadway, played my wife and Abner Biberman directed it. Biberman, if you've ever seen *Gunga Din* [1939], was the actor who played that mean bugger who pushed guys into the snake pit."

Hingle has some very definite ideas about the quality of TV, then and now. "Back in the days of shows like *The Fugitive*, when the networks didn't have so much power, the producer had more power. The network would say, 'We're hiring you to produce X number of episodes,' and a man like Quinn Martin [producer of *The Fugitive*] would then have the networks keep their noses out of it after that point. He had a free hand and could make deals with writers and directors and say to them, 'Listen, I want you to write five scripts for me,' or, 'I want you to direct five scripts for me,' and the creative people then had the lag time—they had time to do it right, to really think about the thing, to re-write and so on.

"I also think that David Janssen was never given all the credit that he had coming to him. I don't know that I've ever been around anybody who worked harder than he did. Actors now, like Angela Lansbury on *Murder, She Wrote*, they get to protect themselves, they get to say, 'OK, at 6:00 I'm going home, guys.' You need to be able to do that when you're the star of a series, when you're in there doing this thing week after week. But David worked such long hours, and so much of that stuff was done on location, which means you work a six-day week instead of a five-day week. There was a believability that he brought to this role, and I think he deserves a lot of the credit for the success of that show.

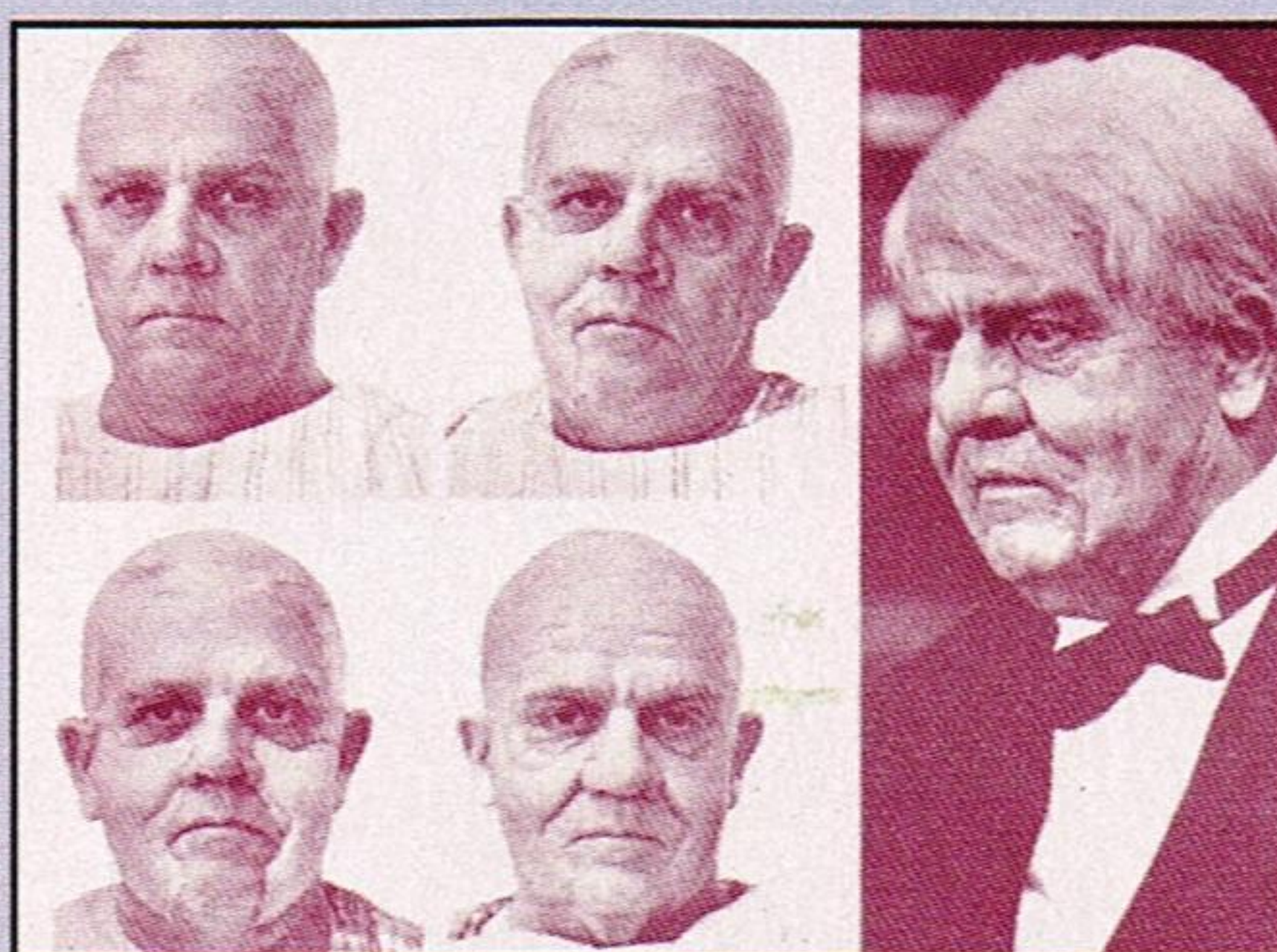
"The same thing goes for *Gunsmoke*—I did seven, maybe eight episodes. Milburn Stone, who played Doc, was a friend of mine, and in the 17th year of *Gunsmoke*, he called me and said, 'I've got to go have open heart surgery. Will you come in and be the doctor on *Gunsmoke*?' I said, 'Milburn, only if they write a new doctor. My own mother wouldn't believe I was Doc Adams!' In the first story, they explained why Doc Adams had had to leave—he wanted to go back to Johns Hopkins because he was out of touch with modern medicine. My character, Dr. Chapman, a surgeon from New Orleans, wanted to replace him because he never got to know people, he just cut on 'em and sewed 'em up, he never got to know 'em as people. He wore this Panama hat, brocaded vest and linen suit, but he had the same principles and dedication to medicine as Dr. Adams did. And he had the

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Although Hingle reappears as Gordon, the new film recasts Harvey Dent (Billy Dee Williams in *Batman*) as Two-Face (Tommy Lee Jones).

Edison Photo: G.E. Theater



Shown in various stages of makeup, Hingle got inventive as Thomas Alva Edison in ads during a GE Theater special.



Photo: CBS

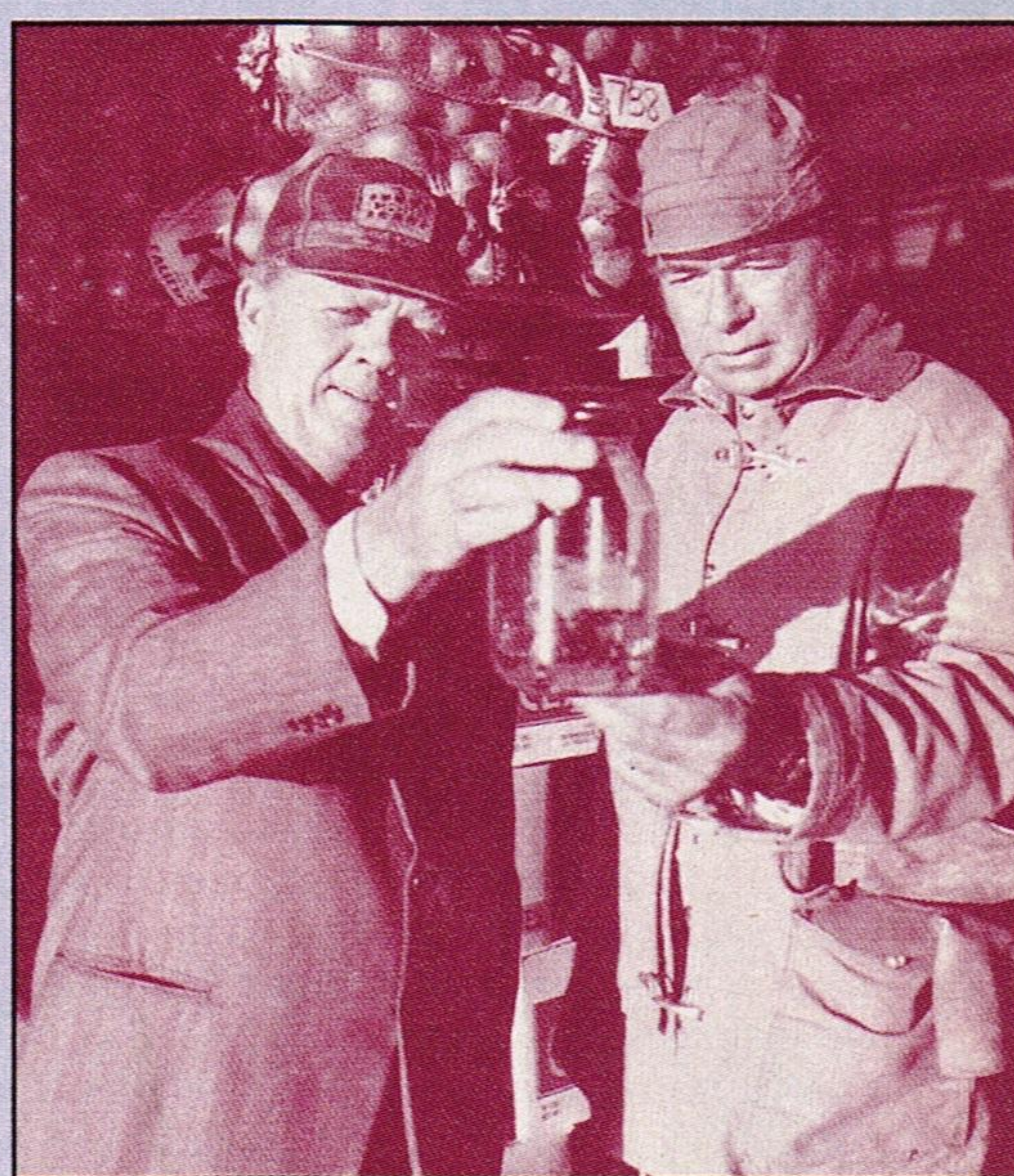
The actor believes his *Twilight Zone*—"The Incredible World of Horace Ford"—was one of the series' finest entries.

same trouble with Festus [Ken Curtis]!

"But, here again, this was a delightful experience because nobody screwed around with *Gunsmoke*. There were no committees from the network, no interference."

## Hanging Judge

According to Hingle, one of the film credits he's best known for is *Hang 'em High* (1968), Hollywood's first attempt at a "spaghetti Western." Hingle was one of many familiar faces in the who's-who cast of top character stars (Ed Begley, Ben Johnson, Charles McGraw, Alan Hale Jr., Bert Freed,



Hingle and Claude Akins scrutinize the poisonous spiders threatening their town in *Tarantulas: The Deadly Cargo*.

etc.). "I had already worked with Clint Eastwood. I was a guest on *Rawhide* in an episode where Rowdy [Eastwood] and Wishbone [Paul Brinegar] came into a town where I played a guy trying to promote gunfights to bet on. I don't think that I had ever worked with Ted Post before, but I found him a very, very good director. Almost all of *Hang 'em High* was done on the backlot at MGM, and not on a budget that was that big, so we had to keep moving along. Ruth White, who played the madam in it, had played my mother on *Twilight Zone*.

"But this is my great memory of *Hang 'em High*: Back in the days when I was a kid, the cowboy stars were Bob Steele, Ken Maynard, Hoot Gibson and actors like that. When the kids got together on Saturday to play, if you were a little short guy, you automatically got to be Bob Steele. If you had big arms and a big chest, you automatically got to be George O'Brien. The other ones, you fought each other for—'You were him last week! It's my turn this week!' And now, there I was

(continued on page 63)



# Hingle

(continued from page 49)

in *Hang 'em High* and Bob Steele was in it! I had a chance to ask Bob Steele a question I wanted to know the answer to all my life. People think that Roy Rogers was the guy who initiated the vault into the saddle over the horse's tail. That's not so at all, Bob Steele did. I asked him, 'How did that happen?' and he said, 'Well, we were losing light one day out on location, and the only way they could keep the camera where it was was for me to get on the horse that way.' He was such a short little guy—God, he was only 5'3" or 5'4"—but he did it. And this was such a hit that the poor bugger could never just get on a horse any more; even in scenes where there was no reason to be in a hurry, he had to vault up onto the horse! He told me, 'Oh, man, it was a real cross to bear!' It's so funny, *Hang 'em High* is one of the movies that I'm asked about the most, because that shows on TV all the time and it's such a favorite with so many people. And yet I remember Bob Steele from it more than I do *Clint*! Of course, I later did two more movies with Clint that he directed [*The Gauntlet*, *Sudden Impact*]. He's a super director."

Hingle played many more movie roles in the 1970s and '80s, in films like *The Super Cops*, *Norma Rae*, *The Falcon and the Snowman* and *The Grifters*. During the making of *When You Comin' Back, Red Ryder?* (1979) in El Paso, Texas, he met his present wife Julie, who worked at the bank where the movie company had their account. He was directed by Stephen King in the "junk

movie" (King's own description) *Maximum Overdrive*, shot at Dino De Laurentiis' studio in Wilmington, North Carolina. "Doing that film was what introduced me to this area," says Hingle. "The studio that Dino built is probably one of the largest in the country—it has 10 soundstages. But then Dino went bankrupt in North Carolina, as he had in Rome and Mexico City. I think he's working on Nova Scotia now! *Maximum Overdrive* was a movie that Stephen directed from his own story. But he didn't have a great deal of film experience at the time, so he didn't realize that he wasn't getting what he needed in order to get this story that he *thought* he was getting."

"When I first started working with Stephen, I thought, 'Golly, *that* guy is from someplace other than where I'm at,' but Stephen is a Maine farmboy—Stephen and I got along just marvelous! Only Emilio Estevez and I were from California; the rest were sort of local actors. Good actors, perfectly capable of doing the roles, but not that experienced in filmmaking."

## Oldest Dinosaur

Better results came from Hingle's two collaborations with Steven Spielberg, an episode of TV's *Amazing Stories* and the cartoon feature *The Land Before Time*. "I've seen Spielberg twice, and I had a delightful time with him. In the episode I did of *Amazing Stories*, I played a cop who arrested the real Santa Claus. This was early on in the series; they hadn't even gone on the air yet. I saw Steven there, and I just met him in passing. Incidentally, all my grandchildren got mad at me when I arrested the real Santa Claus. *Batman* got me back in their good graces, that and *The Land Before Time*."

"That was one of the most beautiful little animated stories. It was about these five little dinosaurs that get separated from their tribe during an earthquake, and they're trying to get across the country. The animation was done in Ireland [by Don Bluth's Irish studio], and it was done in beautiful, muted tones. There was a character called Old Rooter, the oldest dinosaur that had ever lived, and he told the children how they could make it over to rejoin their people—the route they should travel and the things that they would have to look out for. Steven got ahold of this thing, and didn't like the narrator on it. He asked, 'Who is doing the voice of Old Rooter?' and they told him, 'Pat Hingle.' And Steven said, 'That's who we want.' And so he and I stood together on a soundstage, watching the picture, and I did the narration on *Land Before Time*. I had a very, very enjoyable time, and we had a good communication—I think a very good product came of it."

Hingle added an "old-fashioned" SF credit to his filmography via the 1991 TV movie *Not of This World*, about an alien blob threatening a rural California town. "When I do these things, I just turn my frame of mind so it's very believable to me. You have to make believe it's a very realistic, factual kind of thing, and the way you act in it is just the same as any other thing, except that you're

reacting to (in this case) a monster that feeds on electricity, getting bigger and more powerful. I was a retired doctor and I had a daughter [Lisa Hartman] who was a scientist heading a big electrical plant. That was fun."

While Hingle might be best known for the hearty, blustery "nice guy" roles he has played, he has also (convincingly) tackled his share of heavies. "The key to doing that is this: Just remember that there's no such thing as a bad guy who *thinks* he's a bad guy. That's my approach, to rationalize why the character does these bad things, why he thinks it's necessary. One of the greatest times that I've had as an actor was on *The Grifters*. I had never worked with Anjelica Huston, but I had worked with her father [director John Huston], and her grandfather is one of the reasons that I'm an actor. I wanted to emulate the careers of two actors: Walter Huston and Hume Cronyn. Hume and I have gotten to know each other; in fact, Jessica Tandy and I played *Macbeth* at Stratford, Connecticut, in 1961. But I never got to know Walter."

"In *The Grifters*, I play the heavy and Anjelica's a woman who has been stealing from him. And so he punishes her, he knocks her down and brands the back of her hand with his cigar. But then he gives her a hug, a kiss on the cheek, 'Bye-bye, say hello to your son,' all this kind of thing. Some people said it was the most cold-blooded thing they ever saw in their *lives*, but Anjelica and I came out of this thing very, very fond of each other and we had a delightful time! The director, Stephen Frears, just sat back and let us do it."

As homespun as many of the characters he has played, Hingle tends to chalk up a large degree of his success to "good fortune," and often seems to measure that success *not* in terms of money or awards but in "wonderful memories." "I'll be 71 years old soon, and it's great to have such memories. I have known *so* many people, worked for so many *marvelous* directors—Elia Kazan, John Ford, Joseph Mankiewicz, John Huston, Martin Ritt, Tony Richardson. And it's such a wonderful way to live a life and make a *very* nice living. I've educated a lot of children and I live now in this *big*, *big* house that we built right here on the ocean. I've had a wonderful career, and so much of it was on stage at a glorious time."

Pat Hingle has obviously come a long way from the days of playing a bicycle clown on the old Jackie Gleason TV show. The actor has no plans to retire, and no plans to deviate from the type of acting that has kept him in demand for more than 40 years. "I play everything basically the same way: As truthfully as I can. In my own mind and imagination, I make up the reason *why*. Everything that I do, I approach that way. When I do Shakespeare, or something with an accent, I work on the speech until it is my own, until it is as natural for me as it would be for that character. It's hard, in a way, and yet look at it another way: most four-year-old children act so well, so naturally, that it *couldn't* be that difficult. If it was, then the four-year-old child couldn't do it, now *could* he?"

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